

# **Lifeline and Link-Up from an Enforcement Perspective**

# **Enforcement Bureau Mission**

**To promote robust competition and innovation in the telecommunications marketplace by strictly enforcing the Communications Act and the FCC's rules**

# EB Organizational Chart



# Telecommunications Consumers Division

**TCD Goal: To protect consumers from fraudulent, misleading and other harmful practices involving telecommunications.**

**We do this by resolving formal complaints and carrying out investigations.**

**The hot topics we are currently working on include:**

- Lifeline/ Link-Up
- Prepaid Calling Cards
- Truth-In-Billing
- Slamming
- Cramming

# Investigation Procedures

- **Pattern of Practice**
- **SNAP and NARUC calls**
- **Informant**
- **Westlaw/Lexis Nexis Research**
- **Letter of Inquiry**

# Types of Orders Issued

- **Notice of Apparent Liability**
- **Order of Forfeiture**
- **Order and Consent Decree**
- **Order of Admonishment**

# Lifeline and Link-Up provide affordable service for low-income consumers



**YOUR TELEPHONE  
SERVICE IS YOUR  
*LIFELINE***

Did you know that discounts on  
basic phone service are available  
to low-income consumers?

For information:

- Call your local phone company and ask  
about *Lifeline and Link-Up*
- Call the Federal Communications  
Commission (FCC) at 1-888-CALLFCC
- Go to [www.lifeline.gov](http://www.lifeline.gov)

# Selected Rulemaking

- *In the Matter of Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, Report and Order, 12 FCC Rcd 8776 (1997)
- *In the Matter of Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, Twelfth Report and Order, 15 FCC Rcd 12208 (2000)
- *In the Matter of Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, Twenty-Fifth Order on Reconsideration, Report and Order, Order, and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 18 FCC Rcd 10958 (2003)
- *In the Matter of Lifeline and Link-Up*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 19 FCC Rcd 8302 (2004)



# USAC Website with all LL/LU cites

Universal Service Administrative Company Website:

<http://www.universalservice.org/li/tools/rules-orders.aspx>

The screenshot displays the USAC (Universal Service Administrative Company) website. The header features the USAC logo with the tagline "Helping Keep Americans Connected". Navigation links include "Home" and "Need Help?". A search bar is present with a "Search" button. Below the header, there are three main navigation buttons: "Low Income Households", "Familias de Bajos Ingresos", and "Telecommunications Carriers". The "Low Income" section is expanded, showing a list of links under "About Low Income:" and "Low Income Tools:". The "Rules and Orders" section is highlighted, with a sub-section for "RULES" containing a bullet point about 47 C.F.R. § 54.400-417. The "ORDERS" section is also visible, containing three bullet points about the 1997 Universal Service Order, the Sixteenth Order on Reconsideration, and the 2000 FCC Tribal Order.

USAC  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
*Helping Keep Americans Connected*

Home | Need Help? Search

Low Income

- Low Income Households
- Familias de Bajos Ingresos
- Telecommunications Carriers

About Low Income:

- Overview of the Program
- Overview of the Process
- Individual Outreach
- Understanding Audits
- Filing Appeals
- HCLI Training Events
- Video Tutorials

Low Income Tools:

- Latest News
- Calendar/Reminders
- Required Forms
- Disbursement Data
- Rules and Orders
- Tips and Best Practices
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Program Compliance - Whistleblower Hotline
- Submitting A Complaint

Rules and Orders

RULES

- 47 C.F.R. § 54.400-417 are the rules governing the federal Universal Service Fund's Low Income Program.

ORDERS

- The 1997 Universal Service Order, Section 8 established the framework for the current Lifeline and Link Up program, including the eligibility criteria, discount rate, and basic services.
- In the Sixteenth Order on Reconsideration, the FCC agreed with the 5th Circuit Courts decision that the FCC had no jurisdiction to prohibit carriers from disconnecting Lifeline customers who failed to pay their toll charges, and therefore rescinded the "no disconnect" restriction.
- On June 20, 2000 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released the Tribal Order, which enhanced the federal Lifeline and Link Up programs to better serve residents living on or near federally recognized tribal lands and reservations. The Order

# Rules and Regulations

## **47 U.S.C. § 214: Extension of Lines**

214(e)(1)(B)

### PROVISIONS OF UNIVERSAL SERVICE-

- (1) ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIERS - A common carrier designated as a common carrier under paragraph (2), (3) or (6) shall be eligible to receive universal service support in accordance with section 254 and shall, throughout the service area for which the designation is received-
- (B) advertise the availability of such services and the charges therefore using media of general distribution.

# Rules and Regulations (cont'd)

## **47 C.F.R. § 54.405: Carrier Obligation to Offer Lifeline**

### Section 54.405(b)

All eligible telecommunications carriers shall publicize the availability of Lifeline service in a manner reasonably designed to reach those likely to qualify for the service.

# Rules and Regulations (cont'd)

## **47 C.F.R. § 54.411: Link-Up Program Defined**

### Section 54.411(d)

An eligible telecommunications carrier shall publicize the availability of Link-Up support in a manner reasonably designed to reach those likely to qualify for the support.

# Rules and Regulations (cont'd)

## **47 C.F.R. § 54.201: Definition of eligible telecommunications carriers, generally**

Section 54.201(d)(1) and (2)

A common carrier designated as an eligible telecommunications carrier under this section shall be eligible to receive universal service support in accordance with section 254 of the Act and shall, throughout the service area for which the designation is received:

- (1) Offer the services that are supported by federal universal service support mechanism under subpart B of this part and section 254(c) of the Act, either using its own facilities or a combination of its own facilities and resale of another carrier's services (including the services offered by another eligible telecommunications carrier); and
- (2) Advertise the availabilities of such services and the charges therefore using media of general distribution.

- **Pend Oreille Telephone Company, Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture, 19 FCC Rcd 9264 (Enf. Bur. May 24, 2004)**
- **Pend Oreille Telephone Company, Order of Forfeiture, 19 FCC Rcd 19765 (Enf. Bur. Oct. 15, 2004)**
- **Qwest Corporation, Order, 19 FCC Rcd 22533 (Enf. Bur. Nov. 22, 2004)**
- **Verizon Communications Inc., Memorandum Opinion and Order, 20 FCC Rcd 4244 (Enf. Bur. Mar. 2, 2005)**
- **CenturyTel, Inc., Order, 20 FCC Rcd 18168 (Enf. Bur. Nov. 22, 2005)**



# Recent Order

*In the Matter of Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Lifeline and Link Up, Order, CC Docket No. 96-45, 2010 WL 1800713 (2010)*

**In this Order, the FCC asks the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service to review the Commission's eligibility, verification, and outreach rules for the Lifeline and Link Up universal service programs, which currently provide discounts on telephone service for low-income customers. In addition, the FCC seeks review of the potential expansion of the low-income program to broadband, as recommended in the National Broadband Plan.**